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<b>TRANSMITTAL SLIP</b>		DATE 22 February 1979
TO: [REDACTED] C/CSS		
ROOM NO. 3F30	BUILDING HQ	
REMARKS:  FYI  Responses to NIT questions.		
FROM: [REDACTED] NIO/SS		
ROOM NO. 2E49	BUILDING HQ	

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Anticipated Questions for NFAC on the 1980 Production Program

2. *Explain the methodology used for determining the nature and priority of National Intelligence Topics (NITs) of Basic Long-term Interest and of Current Interest. What are the procedures for updating these NITs and for reassessing their respective priorities? What impact did the NITs have on your requested program for 1980? (Cite examples.)*

The National Intelligence Topics are formulated by the top policymakers as a statement of their substantive interests in the light of anticipated policy actions. The nature and priority of both the long-term and current topics are determined by these principal consumers acting jointly as the PRC(I) and in accordance with Executive Order 12036 (1-202). (No intelligence methodology is employed in developing the topics, aside from certain staff support, since they originate not with the Intelligence Community but with the policymakers.) The substance of the NITs is established as a result of a process that involves canvassing of the key policymakers, circulating of draft questions among the members of the PRC(I), and, finally, review and formal approval of the NITs by the PRC(I) itself. The relative priorities are proposed and negotiated in a similar manner by the DCI (as chairman) and individual members of the Committee.

Following procedures worked out last fall by the Steering Group led by D/NFAC, the Current Interest NITs and their respective priorities are reviewed and updated on a Community-wide basis every four months. The review process, guided by the NIOs and production managers in NFAC, INR, and DIA, follows the same pattern outlined above, i.e., obtaining the views and proposals of primary policymakers, consolidating and circulating them for general consideration, and presenting the proposed revisions to the PRC(I) for their final approval.

The impact of the NITs on resource allocation can be seen in the current planning efforts of ORPA, OER, and OGCR to focus analytic attention and assets on areas and issues that figure prominently in the NITs. The increased interest in Key Developing Countries (NITs Sec. IV) is a case in point.

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29 November 1978

1. Executive Order 12036 makes clear the consumers' primary responsibility to set priorities for the Intelligence Community. The National Intelligence Topics, developed by the policymakers themselves and approved by the NSC Policy Review Committee, are the formal expression of these consumer priorities. The big difference between the NIT process and those it replaced--such as the Key Intelligence Questions (K/Qs)--is that guidance in the past has been prepared by the Intelligence Community based on what it assumed were the policymakers needs.

2. The NITs actually include two separate sets of priorities:

- Topics of Basic Interest intended to guide the development of capabilities for collection, research, and analysis over the longer term;
- The more specific Current Interest topics that tell intelligence collectors and producers what top policymakers need over the next six to nine months.

3. Both lists are reviewed and updated by the PRC (I) periodically to keep them current. The principal voice in the updating process is, again, that of the policymaker.

4. Since their inception, the NITs have served as a basis for reviewing analytical production programs to ensure that the output is

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responsive to the policymakers' questions. The NITs will also guide the preparation of more specific and detailed intelligence requirements, particularly those contained in DCID 1/2, /in order to give the collectors as precise guidance as possible.

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PRESIDENTIAL BRIEFING TOPIC  
NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE TOPICS

I'd like to give you a brief report on our progress in establishing new national intelligence priorities.

-- Until this year the Intelligence Community received its substantive guidance largely from a list of priorities known as "Key Intelligence Questions."

- ° You recall that on your first visit to our Headquarters building in March of 1977, we showed you this list and you remarked that they were not your key intelligence questions.
- ° You also mentioned to me several months later that you were not sure the intelligence community was working on issues of most concern to you.

With this in mind, the Executive Order was drafted to make clear the consumers' primary responsibility to set priorities for the Community. The PRC(I) members--Vance, Brown and Brzezinski were particularly active--took their responsibility seriously. They developed a set of substantive priorities that would reflect your needs, as well as their own, for intelligence support--both information and analysis.

The result is the National Intelligence Topics, formally issued recently as PRC(I) guidance and now being circulated throughout the Community and to all US missions overseas.

-- The big difference between the NITs and the KIQs is this:

- The KIQs were prepared by the Intelligence Community based on what they assumed were the policy-makers' needs;
  - The NITs have been formulated by the top policy-makers themselves; for the first time they are telling the Community directly what questions they want answered.
- The PRC(I) decided to establish two sets of priorities:
- The topics of Basic Interest are intended to guide the development of capabilities for collection, research, and analysis over the longer term.
  - The Current Interest topics will tell intelligence collectors and producers what top policymakers need over the next six to nine months. There are a good many more current questions than there were KIQs (59 vs. 17).
  - Both lists will be reviewed and updated by the PRC(I) periodically to keep them current.

The NITs provide essential guidance to my key deputies in their Community roles:

- On the production side, they give [REDACTED] a sound basis for assigning his analytic assets most effectively.
- He has already reviewed and realigned his own production programs in each substantive area to be sure that the output is responsive to the policymakers' questions.

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- ° At the same time, he and the NIOs are working with the analytic staffs at State and Defense (and elsewhere) to try to ensure that all Community production is coordinated and responsive to the NITs.
- ° This will be a tricky process. As you know, the Executive Order makes explicit the DCI's authority to levy analytic tasks on departmental intelligence production organizations. Since it has not previously been exercised, there probably will be some adjustment problems.
- ° Bowie is developing means to institutionalize the coordination and review process, under PRC(I) oversight, and put it on a regular schedule through the year.

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On the collection side, [REDACTED] also will be implementing the new authority delegated to him under the Executive Order for tasking all national collection assets.

- The guidance provided by the NITs will of course be equally useful here.
- The NITs will be "translated" into more specific and detailed intelligence requirements in order to give the collectors as precise guidance as possible.